

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
December 15, 2015

The Jasper County Council met this date at 7:00 P.M. C.S.T. in the Commissioners’ Room, Suite 202, of the Jasper County Courthouse located at 115 West Washington Street, Rensselaer, Indiana, with the following members present: Rein O. Bontreger, Gerrit H. DeVries, John T. Price, Andrew Andree, Gary Fritts, Stephen Jordan and Paul Norwine. Also present was Kimberly K. Grow, Jasper County Auditor. Mr. Bontreger called the meeting to order and those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. DeVries.

MINUTES: Under the “Council Meeting Schedule / 2016”, the dates should have read Tuesday, February 23 and Tuesday, July 12 rather than Tuesday, February 16 and Tuesday, July 19. Mr. Price made the motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on November 17, 2015 with the corrections made. Mr. DeVries seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

2016 SALARY ORDINANCE / AMENDMENTS: At the November Council Meeting, Sheriff Terry Risner requested \$1,000.00 less than what was budgeted for his 2016 salary. Mr. Andree made the motion to approve the following amendment to the 2016 Salary Ordinance. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Public Safety

Sheriff	\$83,000.00
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Mr. Bontreger stated that Kim Grow, Auditor, has worked with the Assessor to establish the correct amounts regarding salaries. Mr. Price made the motion to approve the following amendments to the 2016 Salary Ordinance. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Assessor Department
Assessor

Base Salary	\$45,993.00
Assessor who have attained a Level II	\$46,993.00
Assessor who have attained a Level III	\$48,493.00

Reassessment Assessor
Deputy Assessor

Base Salary	\$35,785.00
Or maximum hourly rate of \$17.20	
Deputy Assessor who have attained a Level II	\$36,285.00
Or maximum hourly rate of \$17.44	
Deputy Assessor who have attained a Level III	\$36,785.00
Or maximum hourly rate of \$17.68	

TRANSFER / CREDIT COUNTY SHARE FUND: A request has been made to transfer \$5,822.47 from Capital Outlays, Equipment into Other Services & Charges, Nexus within the CREDIT County Share Fund. Mr. Jordan made the motion to approve the transfer as requested. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

TRANSFER / CREDIT COUNTY SHARE FUND: A request has been made to transfer \$4,328.68 from Supplies, IT Support and \$7,207.53 from Capital Outlays, Equipment for a total of \$11,536.21 into Other Services & Charges, Low within the CREDIT County Share Fund. Mr. DeVries made the motion to approve the transfer as requested. Mr. Price seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT / TRANSFERS: Several transfer requests were submitted by the Soil & Water Conservation District. The first request has been made to transfer \$242.15 from Supplies, Office Supplies into Other Services & Charges with \$161.95 going into Dues & Subscriptions, \$16.00 going into SWCD Employee Bond and \$64.20 going into Travel within the County General Fund, Soil & Water Conservation District Budget.

The second requested the transfer of \$70.30 from Supplies, Educational into Other Services & Charges, SWCD Bond within the County General Fund, Soil & Water Conservation District Budget.

The third requested the transfer of \$18.77 from Supplies, Office Supplies into Other Services & Charges, SWCD Bond within the County General Fund, Soil & Water Conservation District Budget.

The last request is to transfer \$12.93 from Supplies, Postage into Other Services & Charges, SWCD Bond within the County General Fund, Soil & Water Conservation District Budget. Mr. Andree made the motion to approve all transfers as requested. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

JASPER COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY / TRANSFER: In accordance with Indiana Codes (IC) 6-1.1-18-6 (Transfer of money from one budget classification to another) and 36-1-8-5.1 (Rainy day funds established by political subdivisions), the Jasper County Airport Authority requests approval of the year-end transfer of \$31,267.00 from the JCAA's Operating Fund to the JCAA's Rainy Day Fund. Mr. Price made the motion to approve the transfer as requested. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

INDIANA BICENTENNIAL / JASPER COUNTY PRESENTATION: Karen Wilson and Sheila Schroeder, Bicentennial Chairs, were present to promote Indiana's Bicentennial. The Bicentennial is a year-long celebration of Indiana becoming the 19th State on December 11, 1816. Ms. Schroeder stated that the torch relay will pass through Jasper County on October 11. Nominations for the torch relay are currently being taken with the deadline being January 31, 2016.

CONCERNED CITIZEN / MATHIS: Tom Mathis, Wheatfield resident, distributed copies of a letter that he received from Luke H. Britt, Public Access Counselor, regarding Mr. Mathis' claim of alleged violation of public access laws by the Jasper County Planning and Development Department. Also distributed was a packet of information for the Council's review. Mr. Mathis stated that the first page of the packet is right out of the County's UDO and it states only people who are unable to comply with the provisions of the UDO may apply for a variance. That has not been the case. In the last two variance cases, the petitioner was fully capable of complying with the code. It's a malfunctioning of the system and it needs to be fixed. Our legislative body, the Commissioners, have an obligation to the taxpayers of the County and that is to enforce State law, local ordinances, and resolutions and they are not doing so. You, as the fiscal body, need to lean on this department and make sure that they comply with the law. It's selective enforcement, the way this BZA is operating and it needs to be stopped. In regards to how the Public Access Counselor works, Mr. Mathis stated that he first files with Planning & Development to retrieve the records, the written determination or finding of facts for the variance which they are mandated by law to keep. Mr. Mathis stated that he was told by the Secretary of Planning & Development that they do not follow Indiana Code. Therefore, I had to proceed and go to the Public Access Counselor. Planning & Development did not even respond to the State on this issue.

COUNTY TAX RATES / CITIZEN'S CONCERN: Robert Shank, concerned citizen, stated that he had a need to check the county tax rates. Mr. Shank noted that we are now 3rd highest. Mr. Shank questioned why we aren't awash in money with a high income tax and the high value of farmland? Where is all that money going? Mr. Bontreger replied that, overall, the property tax rates in our county are lower as a result of the Local Option Income Tax. Essentially, the State has a limit as to what they are going to let us collect. Mr. Shanks asked if what they (State) are letting us have is what we as taxpayers are paying in county taxes? Mr. Bontreger replied that it is essentially based on the revenues that they project that we will be able to get and that determines the amount of money that we're going to be able to receive.

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COUNTY TAX RATES / CITIZEN’S CONCERN CON’T: Mr. Shanks replied that what he understands is that some of the money that we are paying as county taxes actually isn’t going to the County. Mr. Jordan stated that the bottom line is that as assessed valuation changes, your tax rate changes. Mr. Price explained that the State sets what the assessed value is on farmground. The County has nothing to do with that. As the farmers and wage earners are paying more, the residential and commercial are paying less.

SALARY / ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER: Kim Mainardi, concerned citizen, questioned if the Council had made a decision regarding the salary increase of the new Animal Control Officer. Mr. Bontreger replied that they have not made a decision. The item will be placed on the agenda for the January meeting. Mr. Price stated that they also felt that they wanted a little bit of a track record before making a decision. Ms. Mainardi agreed that a person should have to prove themselves when given a job. Ms. Mainardi stated that she does not see how you ask for more money without having any experience. In response to a question from Ms. Mainardi, Mr. Bontreger replied that the public will be allowed to speak before a decision is made.

There being no further business, Mr. DeVries made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Rein O. Bontreger, President

ATTEST:

Kimberly K. Grow, Auditor of Jasper County

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